

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1 and 2 have been canceled. Thus, claims 3-20 are pending in this application. Arguments are provided herein for overcoming the rejections based on the prior art cited by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance.

I. Drawing Objections

In the Office Action, the Examiner objects to the drawings under 37 CFR §1.83(a) as not showing every feature of the invention specified in the claims. More specifically, the Examiner states that the drawings fail to show the “design specifics of the blade” as recited in the last two lines of claim 1 and the last two lines of claim 14.

Claims 1 and 2 have been canceled. Thus, an inclined rotational plane of the blade is no longer recited in the claims and is not required to be shown in the drawings.

The last two lines of independent claim 14 state that “the blade has in a radial direction at least two cutting edge regions (20, 21, 22) with different cutting heights”.

FIG. 1 of the present invention illustrates a blade (12) of a lawnmower having three cutting edge regions, 20, 21 and 22. An outermost cutting region (22) of the blade, in a radial direction, is spaced relatively close to the underlying ground surface. An innermost cutting region (20) of the blade is located radially inward of the outermost cutting region (22) and is spaced relatively high from the underlying ground surface. The application states that the purpose of this blade configuration is that most of the grass extending from the ground surface will first be cut to height defined by innermost blade cutting region (20) and then ultimately will be cut to a final height defined by the outermost blade cutting region (22). Thus, the grass extending from the ground is cut several times in small increments to thereby reduce the size (ie., length) of the grass cuttings.

Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that FIG. 1 of the present application, as filed, clearly illustrates a blade with at least two cutting edge regions (20 and 22) that provide different cutting heights. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that every feature of claim 14 is clearly shown in FIG. 1. Applicants also submit that the design specifics of the blade required by claims 3-13 and 15-20 are illustrated in FIGs. 1-4 of the present application, as filed.

Applicants request reconsideration and removal of the drawing objections under 37 CFR §1.83(a).

II. Objection of the Abstract

A new abstract is provided herewith. Applicants request reconsideration and removal of the objection of the abstract.

III. Claim Rejections - 35 USC §102(b)

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 1-20 under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,142,851 issued to Lyde et al.

The Lyde patent discloses a “post-processor” apparatus that is in communication with the discharge outlet of a lawnmower to receive grass clippings from the lawnmower. Thus, Lyde teaches that grass is cut from a ground surface by the blade of a lawnmower, and thereafter, the grass clippings are discharged into a “post processor” apparatus. The “post processor” apparatus subjects the grass clippings to further cutting to reduce the size, or length, of the grass clippings. The “post processor” apparatus has a blade that is separate from the lawnmower blade utilized to initially cut the grass from the underlying ground surface. The “post processor” blade is located in its own housing separate from the

lawnmower housing. The Lyde patent states that the “post-processing chamber 42 is completely enclosed by the housing top and bottom members 33, 34 and side walls 34 ...”.

See column 3, lines 22-26, of Lyde.

Unlike the “post processor” of Lyde, the present invention relates to a lawnmower having a single housing and a single blade therein responsible for cutting grass directly from an underlying ground surface in a manner that provides grass clippings of reduced size/length.

The present invention utilizes a single “blade” element that has a radially outermost cutting region that is located relatively close to the underlying ground surface and that defines the ultimate height of the trimmed grass of the underlying ground surface. (See items 12, 22 and 23 in FIG. 1.) An inner cutting region of the blade, which is located radially inward of the outermost cutting region, extends at a higher height above the underlying surface than the outermost cutting region. (See items 20 and 22 in FIG. 1.) A base plate shields the grass of the underlying surface from being cut by the outermost cutting region of the blade in the front half of the lawnmower. (See items 19, 19' in FIGs. 1 and 2.) Thus, the grass is first cut to a height defined by the inner cutting region of the blade, when the rear half of the lawnmower passes over the underlying ground surface. Thereafter, the grass is ultimately cut by the outermost cutting region of the blade to a final height. The grass may be cut incrementally several times by intermediate cutting region (21) of the blade before being cut to its final height by the outermost cutting region of the blade. Thus, the height of a blade of grass extending from the underlying surface is severed several times in relatively short-length increments from the ground surface thereby providing grass clippings of desired short lengths.

Thus, the present invention accomplishes the function of the “post processor” described in Lyde without the need of a separate blade, housing, and the like components

required by Lyde. In addition, the present invention accomplishes this function in a more reliable, productive, and efficient manner.

Independent claim 14 of the present application requires a lawnmower having a blade housing (11) in which a “blade” element (12) rotates about a vertical rotational axis (13) so that, for movement of the mower in a mowing direction (17), “cutting material is cut from the ground surface corresponding to a diameter of the blade”. Thus, the claimed “blade” element is required to be the blade that actually trims the grass directly from the underlying ground surface. The blade housing (11) is required to be partially (not fully) covered by a base plate (19) which runs between the blade and the ground surface. Claim 14 clearly requires the base plate to extend in a “front region (18)” of the housing since its purpose is to prevent the outer cutting edge of the blade from first cutting the grass to its final height before other sections of the blade have had an opportunity to cut the grass from the underlying ground surface in short increments before being ultimately cut to a final height. In addition, the claimed “blade” element is required to have at least two cutting edge regions (20 and 22) at different cutting heights.

The “post processor” of Lyde has a base plate that fully encloses the post-processing blade. See column 3, lines 22-26, of Lyde. Thus, Lyde fails to disclose the claimed “base plate” element required by claim 14 of the present application which only partially encloses the blade such that the base plate extends in a front region of the housing and not in a rear region of the housing. This prevents the blade from cutting grass from an underlying surface as the blade rotates in the front region of the housing and permits the blade to cut grass from the underlying ground surface as the blade rotates in the rear region of the housing.

In the Office Action, the Examiner points to the opening in the post-processing chamber that receives grass clippings cut by the blades of the lawnmower. This opening

merely permits the transfer of grass clippings between the lawnmower chamber and the post-processing chamber. It is clearly located on a side of the lawnmower housing and not the front of the lawnmower housing. In addition, it does not permit the post-processing blade to cut grass directly from an underlying surface. See column 3, lines 22-26, of Lyde.

Claim 14 clearly requires the sole claimed “blade” element to cut grass directly from the underlying ground surface. The post processing blade of Lyde cannot cut grass from the underlying surface since it is completely enclosed in a chamber with a closed base. In addition, the lawnmower blades disclosed by Lyde which actually cut the grass from the underlying surface are not utilized in combination with a base plate. No single blade is disclosed in the Lyde patent that has at least two cutting edge regions at different cutting heights.

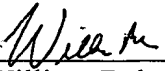
Therefore, for the above stated reasons, independent claim 14 of the present application is clearly not anticipated by the Lyde patent. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and removal of the §102(b) rejection of independent claim 14. Applicants also respectfully requests reconsideration and removal of the §102(b) rejection of claims 3-13 and 15-20 which depend directly or indirectly from independent claim 14.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that the rejections have been overcome and that the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, a favorable action on the merits is therefore requested.

Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment for entering this Amendment
to our deposit account no. 08-3040.

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